

University of Nebraska at Kearney

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School Buildings

Schools


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1873

### Pleasant Hill - Dist. #16

Country School Legacy: Humanities on the Frontier

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# COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY:

## Humanities on the Frontier

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Project Director—Andrew Gulliford

Media Director—Randall Teeuwen

Exhibits Director—Berkeley Lobanov

### HISTORIC SITE FORM

State Nebraska County Buffalo

Location (in miles & direction from nearest town) \_\_\_\_\_

7 miles north of Kearney

Is this the original location? no

Name of building & origin of name Pleasant Hill #16  
1873

Name & number of the district Pleasant Hill # 16

Date built 1873 Years in use 11 yrs on newly

Who built it? A contractor or the community? \_\_\_\_\_  
Contractor

Does it look like it came from a plan book or was it designed by the community? \_\_\_\_\_

plan book

Names of former teachers: Rose Shoulain, Roach  
E. R. Drake, Edna Zimmer, Vera  
Collins, Vera Boykin, Bernice Edson  
Catherine Johnson, Deanna Bentley, Judy Roth  
Patricia Davis, Coleen Jacobson

Names of former students (family names only):  
Burton, Whitcher, Sam Campbell, Ellick Nelson  
Altmeier, Shafte, Richter, Classen  
Kreitzer, Richter  
Harmon, Maye, Kegly

Name & address of person in charge of building:

Ed Classen, Pres. Rt 3  
Kearney, Neb.

Who is the owner? School Dist





## COUNTRY SCHOOL LEGACY HISTORIC SITE FORM

## Architectural Features:

Size of building 55 x 55Number of Windows (four pane, six pane, etc.) one paneNumber of doors (entrances) 4 entrancesNumber of classrooms 3Bell tower or cupola noMaterials used (wood, brick, stone, etc.) BrickType of roof CompositionOuthouses noPlayground Equipment Slide, teeter totter, Swings, Monkey Bars  
Ring & TrapezeColor of building & trim Brick and whiteCoal shed or stable noTeacherage noFlagpole yes

Other architectural features:

none

Anything left inside?

Usual desks and school  
equipment

Narrative Information: Did any special events happen at the school? What stories do people remember?

none

Current condition &amp; use:

Very good 3 teachers  
and studentsDistrict records available: yes ☒ no ☐ where stored                     Black & white photo taken: yes ☒ no ☐Old photos available: yes ☒ no ☐Does the building have any state or national historic designation? noName & address of surveyor Phyllis Grundy date Nov. 29, 1980





FROM THE PAST. John May is shown mounted upon his 20-year-old draft horse, "Queenie," as his classmates at Pleasant

Hill School look on in admiration. John rides the horse to school from his home three miles away almost daily. (Hub Photo)

## Schoolboy on Horse Fast Fading Scene

Many of the familiar scenes of rural life in America are rapidly fading from existence.

Perhaps one of the most pleasant memories cherished by many of today's farmers is that of riding one of their father's old draft horses to school during the winter months, when the animal

was not needed at home.

Then along came the tractor, displacing the horse on the farm. Today, only a few farmers keep horses, and only a few farm boys have the good fortune to be able to ride one to school.

### LUCKY YOUTH

John May, 14-year-old eighth

grade pupil at Pleasant Hill rural school, located about eight miles north of Kearney on Highway 10, is one of the lucky farm youths of the mechanical age. He rides to school almost daily on a 20-year-old draft horse named "Queenie."

The sturdy animal is one of two

horses his father, Ross, keeps on his 240-acre farm located three miles from the school. John has been riding "Queenie" to school shortly before nine o'clock every morning, then home again at four in the afternoon for the last four years.

During the day, while John is in school, "Queenie" quite contentedly stands tied to a nearby

fence. John makes sure she doesn't get hungry by feeding her just before starting for school and again after arriving home from school.

### STEADY GALLOP

The two make the three-mile trip in about a half an hour, with "Queenie" galloping along the full distance.

John has two older brothers and three older sisters. His older brothers also rode horseback to school.

Like most farm boys, John eventually hopes to have a farm of his own when he is grown and out of school. Since he is especially fond of horses, he plans on having some of them around, along with some cattle.

One of his chores at home is feeding and caring for his 4-H Club sheep and baby beef projects and his father's calves before going to school in the mornings and again in the evenings. He has been in 4-H work for the past six years and is a member of the Riverdale Rustlers Livestock Club.

### OTHER PUPILS

Although 23 other pupils go to the Pleasant Hill school, John is the only one using a horse for transportation. Many of the other children's parents drive them to school in cars and some ride bicycles, while others walk.

Catherine Springer teaches the kindergarten children and the pupils in the first four grades. Edna Seegar, John's teacher, has the pupils in grades five through eight.

Next year, "Queenie" is due for retirement at least as far as school is concerned. Since John will be moving on to high school, he will have to find a new form of transportation, while "Queenie" stays home and grazes.



GIBBON SCHOOL      DISTRICT 25  
GIBBON, BUFFLO COUNTY, NEBRASKA

In August 1967, a one room, white frame school house in excellent condition was moved from northwest of Gibbon, in Bufflo County, to Stuhr Museum. It was donated by Dr. Kenneth Pierson of Neligh, Nebraska who attended the school in the 1930's.

The county superintendent's records of School District 25 show this school must have been in operation in 1876, and it could possibly have been used a year or two earlier.

The floor frame of tongue and groove and dowel construction confirms the date of construction of the building. The side walls and windows are believed to be of a later construction. Museum officials estimate that the desks, stove and other furnishings inside the school building were manufactured and placed in the building near the turn-of-the-century.

The bell tower and wood window frames (used to replace aluminum counterparts) came from an unused building near Prague, Nebraska. The very old lightning rod and weather vane came from Prague, also.

From a 1914 program of District 25, the school roster included four boys and two girls in the primary, two boys in the second grade, one boy and two girls in the fourth grade, three girls in the sixth grade, five boys in the seventh grade and three boys and two girls in the eighth grade. There was one teacher.

The pioneers, aware that education was the key to success, lost no time establishing schools. Some were privately operated. The first school in Hall County was taught by Theodore Nagel in his log house in 1864. It was a private school and there were six students, all boys, the first year. The instruction was in German as Mr. Nagel did not speak English. Soon, school districts were established.

In many areas, the one room rural school not only educated the young, it also served as a community center. Evening school programs, box socials and the big school picnic at the close of the school year were the featured school activities. Often religious services were held in the building on Sunday until the congregation could afford to build a church. Community groups would use the school as a meeting place for evening sessions as it was centrally located in the district and usually was the only available building.



The educational standards were low before the certification of teachers. Sometimes the teacher had no more than an eighth grade education. Girls would use teaching as a stop-gap between her own schooling and a hopeful marriage. Young men often used it as a means of income while reading law or preparing for other professions. During the last of the nineteenth century, the salary varied from \$15 to \$25 a month. In the summer, the teacher attended Teacher's Institute to learn new subject matter and new teaching techniques. The teacher usually boarded with one of the families in the district, and had to walk or ride a horse to the school to the school house, serve as a custodian, make a fire in the pot-bellied stove, sweep, and pump water for drinking. Lessons had to be prepared for each subject, sometimes as many as 14 in the seventh and eighth grades, for each of the eight grades. While teaching one group, the teacher had to keep track of the activities of the other students. As the sole authority the teacher served as disciplinarian, doctor, nurse, emergency handler, referee for fights, serve on the baseball team, satisfy the peculiarities of the School Board, and educate the youngsters! That any one person could accomplish these super-human feats is proven by the quality of the farmers, professional people and authors who received their education in a one room rural school and became successes.

#### INVENTORY - GIBBON SCHOOL

Long recitation bench	Rollup wall map of Nebraska
Piano and bench	Framed picture of George Washington
Heating stove "Round Oak" no. 18 1894	Framed picture of Abraham Lincoln
2 Coal scuttles	Small American Flag
Stove mat	Miniature 48 star flag, souvenir of "Interstate Soldiers Reunion" Nevada, Missouri, 1905. It belonged to J.A. Depew who attended every reunion for 25 years.
Wood folding chair pat. 1893	Dictionary - Webster's Unabridged
Wood bookcase - original wainscoating on door, from Hartman School in Buffalo County, Mrs. Alice Wiley taught in the school before her marriage. Her husband and three of their children attended the school. Mr. Wiley was born in 1886.	Metal stand-tripod-used with dictionary
School books fill the book case	Wood bench - very old
12" International Globe	School bell - It belonged to Mr. Cowie, the donor's father when he taught school on a site west of the present Grand Island High School
Cane stand for globe	3 Ink wells
Standing blackboard	2 double desks
Organ stool-Metal claw feet with glass balls	4 single desks
Pump organ "The Lake Side Troler" Sweetland, Chicago, Illinois	1 set of 3 small desks, bolted to two boards
Chair for teacher	
Desk for teacher	



2 sets of 2 desks each, bolted to two  
boards  
4 desks, each separately bolted to  
two boards

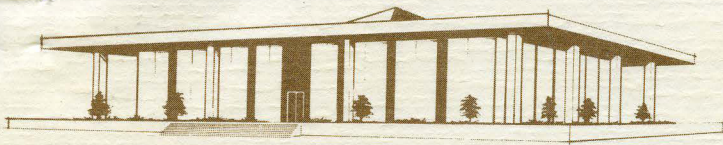
#### THE HALL

Enamel dipper  
Granite bucket  
Granite drinking cup

#### OUTSIDE AREA

Pump  
Flag pole  
1 "two Holer"  
Bell in belfry - from a Prague, Nebr.  
rural school  
Lightning rod - from a Prague, Nebr.  
rural school





## STUHR MUSEUM OF THE PRAIRIE PIONEER

3133 W. HIGHWAY 34 ■ GRAND ISLAND, NEBRASKA 68801

PHONE 308/384-1380

### CURRENT USE OF THE GIBBON RURAL SCHOOL IN THE MUSEUM'S CULTURAL HERITAGE PROGRAM

In April, 1975, an ESEA Title III proposal was sent from the Grand Island School District to the Nebraska Department of Education. This was for a fully structured K-6 program coordinating the school curricula with the collection of Stuhr Museum. The funded project became the Cultural Heritage Through The Visual Arts Program.

Briefly, each grade with a specific topic of study was coordinated with artifacts and activities at the museum.

In 1979, the Grand Island School District voted to assume this program as a regular budget item. It is now a Grade I-VI program.

Grade IV, which averages about 480 students each year, utilizes the museum's rural school. After prework in the classroom studying rural school instruction, one class a day is transported to the museum by school vans. The class is then divided and each half rotates at lunch time. Half the class spends half a day in school. The schoolhouse is well supplied with early texts, slates, slate pencils, straight pens and ink. The class does spelling bees, penmanship exercises, and studies Nebraska history and geography. Students and teacher are responsible for carrying in firewood and water. Recess is time for such games as hoop rolling and Red Rover.

For several years, retired teachers taught these classes, however, as it became more difficult to acquire them, we now use the regular classroom teacher. Both teacher and students are encouraged to wear appropriate period clothing.

The other half of the class spends its half day, before they change over, at the Railroad Town's Blacksmith Shop. The resident Smith directs hands-on activities so that each class has some small tool to take back with them. The Smith does an excellent job with the students describing the importance of a blacksmith in the life of early Plains towns. Almost every tool can be traced back to its origin as it was first made in an early blacksmith shop.

On-site work, activities and study in this project have proven to be excellent educational and true humanizing experiences.



Accredited by the American Association of Museums